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The NHS in North Wales needs to evolve to meet new challenges.

We now live longer – the proportion of people aged over 75 years in North Wales is higher than the average for Wales at 9.3 per cent compared to 8.6 per cent (that’s 64,000 people). For males, life expectancy is 78 years and for females, it 82 years. The good news is that many people reach these ages in good health. However, we need to do more to help everyone of all ages to have an active, healthy and happy life and to stay well as long as possible. This will involve helping you live well and be active physically and socially and to avoid bad habits such as smoking, poor diet and too much alcohol. We will do this in partnership with you and with the help of other organisations such as local councils and the voluntary sector.

More people are now, however, living with one or more complex health issues and diseases like diabetes. We will do more to help and work with people to better manage these conditions so that they can live their life to the full.

We know that more people are experiencing mental health issues - one in four of us will be affected at some point in our lives. Also, there are more people living with dementia. We will work with our partners and people with experience of mental health problems to design and deliver modern mental health services and do more to support people with have to live with long term mental health problems.

There are increasing demands on our primary care and community services. We will work with GPs and their teams to provide more and better services closer to your home. We will also do what we can to attract more GPs to work here.

There are also increasing demands on our hospital services, for example, in our Emergency Departments, which means that often we cannot see patients as quickly as we should. Also, waiting times for a number of operations such as replacement joints or eye surgery are too long.

We face financial challenges and we need to make sure that we work efficiently so that every penny we spend is spent wisely and well.

We need to change the way we work and how we involve you in order to meet these challenges.

**THE NHS IN NORTH WALES TODAY**

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board is responsible for planning, funding and delivering primary care (the services you receive within or via your GP Practice) and community services (District Nurses, Health Visitors, Mental Health Teams etc) and hospital services across the whole of North Wales.

The vast majority (up to 90 per cent) of the care people receive is through their GP and our network of community hospitals, health centres, clinics, mental health units and increasingly in people’s own homes.

Care is provided by skilled teams of health professionals including Doctors, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Dieticians, District Nurses, Community Mental Health Teams, Health Visitors and a range of support workers.

We also co-ordinate the work of over 100 GP practices and NHS services provided by dentists, opticians and pharmacists in North Wales.

We have three District General Hospitals covering North Wales – Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor, Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan and Wrexham Maelor Hospital. People living in South Gwynedd also use Bronglais General Hospital and those living in Deeside use the Countess of Chester Hospital. We also have a network of Community Hospitals across North Wales.

We work with many other organisations to ensue you have the right care and support. These include the voluntary sector, the six local authorities, North Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The way the NHS works has changed dramatically over the last few decades; for example, in the past, having an operation meant long stays in hospital to recover. Today, up to 80 per cent of all operations are day cases, which means that patients go home on the same day. We also now provide treatments and services that were once only available outside North Wales but are now provided locally. We have our own specialist services in North Wales including the Cancer Centre and a Catheter Laboratory in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd where cardiac (heart) tests and procedures including the fitting of pacemakers are carried out. Surgery for gynaecological cancer (women’s cancer including cancer of the ovary and of the cervix) treatment is provided at Ysbyty Gwynedd for all North Wales residents, while Wrexham Maelor specialises in surgery for upper gastrointestinal cancer (gullet and stomach). There is clear evidence that specialist services provided in one large unit by a highly trained, specialist team means that, although patients may have to travel further, the results they get are better than if they were treated in smaller centres.

These specialist services affect only a small number of our patients and our three General Hospitals provide a very wide range of services for the people in each area of North Wales.

Some very specialist services are however beyond what we can presently provide and patients will continue to be sent to specialist centres such as the Walton Centre and Alder Hey Children’s Hospital in Liverpool and Gobowen Hospital.

**THE NHS IN NORTH WALES IN THE FUTURE**

We will become more of a ‘wellness’ service than an ‘illness’ service and work with you and others such as local authorities and the third sector to plan for the future needs of people living in North Wales.

## We will do more to give children the best start in life, taking action as soon as possible to tackle problems for children and families before they become more difficult to reverse.

We will work with others to support everyone in staying fit and healthy throughout life and ensure we can support help people make the right choices for them at the end of life.

Our ambition is also to narrow the gap in life expectancy between those who live the longest in the more affluent areas of North Wales and those living in our more deprived communities.

We will target our efforts and resources to support those with the poorest health to improve the fastest. This work has already started through our Well North Wales Programme in six of our most deprived local communities.

The services offered by your GP’s practice will remain central to providing healthcare close to where you live. We will build on the work we have already done to introduce a broader range of health and social care professionals – including Specialist Nurses, Pharmacists and Therapists – to work with GPs and their teams. This will mean that you will see the health care professional who is best placed to meet your needs.

We will expand our community teams who work together to care for people in their community and in their own home if needed. There will be a single point of contact to arrange for the right healthcare professional to go to people when they need them. We have already started some of this work with the Healthy Prestatyn Iach project, Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioners working on the Llŷn Peninsula and health and social care teams working together more closely in Gwynedd (Ffordd Gwynedd).

We will maximise our use of technology including video consultations to support people and prevent them from having to travel to appointments - particularly when they are suffering from a chronic condition. We are already doing this in the North West to connect patients at rural community hospitals including Ysbyty Alltwen near Porthmadog, Dolgellau Hospital and Ysbyty Bryn Beryl near Pwllheli with doctors in Bangor.

We are investing in modern, purpose-built facilities that bring together community teams under one roof to offer a range of services for local people including things like x-ray, tests to help diagnose illnesses, sexual health, mental health and various therapies. Llangollen Health Centre and the new wing of Tywyn Hospital are already open and new centres at Blaenau Ffestiniog and Flint are under construction and will provide services that the whole community will benefit from. A new health campus development for North Denbighshire is being planned for the site of the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Rhyl. Our intention is that we will use Community Hospitals and Health Centres as local health ‘hubs’ for services in our communities.

At each of our District General Hospitals, we will continue to have the following core services:

* a full Emergency Department;
* consultant-led maternity and paediatric services;
* direct admission for medical care for people who are unwell;
* direct admission for people who need an operation;
* less complex vascular procedures (for diseases affecting blood vessels);
* outpatient clinics, day case surgery and diagnostic services (tests that help diagnose a condition).

This means that people can be assessed in any of our Emergency Departments but might need to be transferred to the most appropriate hospital for more specialist care.

We will treat as many patients as possible in North Wales and continue where clinically possible and safe to create specialist centres for treating more complex conditions. We are currently developing a Sub-Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Service (SuRNICC) at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. This will mean that more poorly babies can stay in North Wales.

By April 2018, all major surgery on arteries (vascular surgery) will be provided in a specialist centre at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. This will ensure that we can provide treatment that meets the highest standards and will attract the specialist doctors we need to carry out these complex operations.

We are considering which other services could deliver better outcomes for patients by being developed into specialist centres. We are looking at modern technology for some cancer surgery – particularly pelvic cancer – which will need to be based in a specialist theatre. We are also looking at how we deliver urology services more effectively, more timely orthopaedic surgery and ophthalmic surgery and hyper-acute stroke services (the first 72 hours following the onset of stroke symptoms).

For some very specialised care people will need to travel to hospitals outside of Wales - just as they do now - for major physical trauma injuries, neurosurgery, specialist treatment for children and some cancer treatments - but we will make as much of the testing and diagnosis as local as possible and support people to make an early return home.

With the support of the Welsh Government we are investing in our buildings to bring them up to 21st Century standards. This includes major developments such as at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and the Emergency Department at Ysbyty Gwynedd and the proposed new hospital / health campus in Rhyl. We will be developing similar plans for other General and Community Hospitals.

**WHAT NOW?**

We want to build our plans for the future in partnership with the people of North Wales and our partners. To do this, we need to work with you and the communities in North Wales to find the best solutions that will deliver the best health and health service for everyone.

We will be producing a range of information and materials which will describe this in more detail. More information can be found at: [www.bcugetinvolved.wales](http://www.bcugetinvolved.wales)